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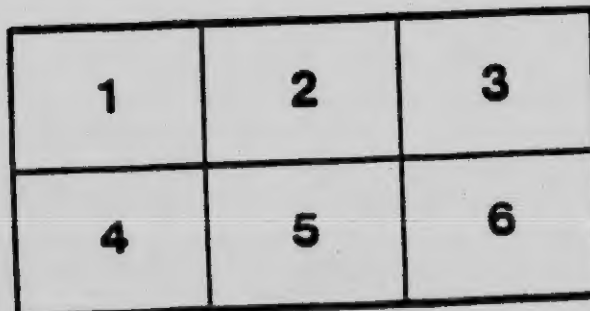
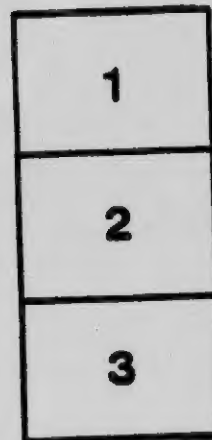
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IMPERIAL PROBLEMS

MIRRORED IN THE

Imperial Press Conference

(1)

BY M. E. NICHOLS



207

REPRINTED FROM THE WINNIPEG TELEGRAM

JULY, 1909





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IMPERIAL PROBLEMS

I

A study of the causes which contributed to the success of the Imperial Press Conference opens up some interesting phases of the great epoch-making problem that has been thrust upon Great Britain and the British Empire. A success in the ordinary acceptance of the word, the conference must have been with the splendid organizing ability of Harry E. Brittain and the resourcefulness of its two principal promoters, Lord Northcliffe and C. Arthur Pearson. But the conference was more than a success. It was a triumph—a triumph far beyond the accomplishment of any individual or group of individuals. It was the triumph of events, the realization of a great idea by the very force of occurrences in which it was happily launched.

An Imperial Press Conference five years ago might not have been a failure, but it could hardly have been more than a mechanical success. It would have been a round of well-organized festivities, gracious hospitality and perfunctory speeches. And that would have been all that human thought and human effort could have made it. The conjunction of events made it immeasurably more. It inspired speeches which will go down in history among the notable utterances of English public men. It brought forth a warmth of hospitality on the part of the English people far exceeding that which the amenities of the occasion required. It opened castles and mansions to the entertainment of guests whose only claim to recognition was as members of a world-wide family circle—the great brotherhood of citizens of the Empire. It paraded at Aldershot one of the most formidable divisions of the British army and assembled at Spithead the most powerful naval armament the world has ever seen.

All this was ostensibly for the entertainment and instruction of sixty delegates representing the press of the British Empire. But in reality it had a much deeper significance. The press and the individuals representing it, drawn from the four corners of the earth, were merely the visible embodiment of that newer, broader and infinitely more intense idea of Empire which has impressed itself on the people of the United Kingdom. It was this idea that found expression in the notable events associated with the Imperial Press Conference. The ordinary problems of Empire have for the moment been shelved for the overshadowing problem of defence. It is not an issue that the Empire has sought; it is one that has been thrust upon her. Though the storm may not break today nor yet tomorrow the trend of European politics is such as to force upon the public mind of

Great Britain the unwelcome conclusion that sooner or later the trial of strength must come. In all the great speeches delivered by the public men of the United Kingdom in connection with the Imperial Press Conference that was the sinister theme. The danger was discussed cautiously but frankly by men in office and out of office and the tenor of these momentous utterances was that the Empire should be prepared for the worst. Lord Rosebery, in the memorable speech delivered at the inaugural banquet on June 5, spoke with the knowledge of a trained diplomat when he said:

"What is by far the most vital topic you have to discuss at this conference, one which concerns the Empire as a whole, is the subject of Imperial defence. I do not know that I have ever seen a condition of things in Europe, so remarkable, so peaceful and in some respects more menacing as the condition which exists at this moment. There is such a hush in Europe in which you might hear a leaf fall to the ground.

"There is an absolute absence of any of the questions which invariably lead to war. One of the great empires which sometimes was supposed to menace peace is entirely engrossed with its own domestic affairs. Another great Eastern empire which furnished a perpetual problem for European statesmen, has taken a new lease of life and of use in the world of liberty and constitutional reform. All then forbodes peace and yet at the same time combined with this total absence of all questions of friction there never was in the history of the world so threatening or so overpowering a preparation for war.

"That is the sign which I confess to regard as most ominous. For forty years it has been a platitude to say that all Europe is an armed camp, and for forty years it has been true that all the nations have faced each other armed to the teeth and that has been in some respects a guarantee of peace. But now what do we see? Without any tangible reason we see the nations preparing new armament. They cannot indeed arm any more men upon land so they have to seek new armaments upon the sea piling up this enormous preparation as if for an approaching Armageddon.

"I admit that I think there are features of this general preparation for war which must cause special anxiety to friends of Great Britain and of the British Empire. But I will not dwell on these tonight. I will only say this that I will ask you when you are in this country to compare carefully the armaments of Europe with our preparations to meet them and give your impression to the Empire in return."

Lord Rosebery spoke with the freedom of a retired politician, but it is not to be doubted that he spoke the mind of the average intelligent citizen of Great Britain and what is still more significant, that he voiced the sentiments of the British government. If the latter were mere conjecture when Lord Rosebery delivered his great speech it became a matter of certainty a few days later when Sir Edward Grey, secretary of state for foreign affairs, stated at the Imperial Press Conference that he endorsed every word spoken by Lord Rosebery concerning the dangerous trend of events in Europe. In the course of an impressive speech the foreign secretary said:

"We are in comparatively calm weather not in stormy weather in foreign politics. The excessive expenditure on armaments, however, makes the air sultry. The seriousness of that expenditure cannot be overlooked and you should know today how conscious we are at home that there is far

too much at stake to let our naval expenditure fall behind, whatever the burden may be."

Such an utterance from a prudent, cool-headed foreign minister like Sir Edward Grey implies a critical situation in European politics. Its importance was noted by Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, leader of the opposition, who also spoke with the authority of a trained diplomat when he said:

"And everyone who attempts to read the signs of the times will, I think, agree with the weighty words which fell from Lord Rosebery less than a week ago, and from Sir Edward Grey yesterday, and can recognize that no man can now speak on this subject of Imperial Defence without some note of anxiety in his voice. No panic. There is no question of panic, but we all have to look around us at the gathering forces, the arrangement of possible foes, the strategic import of possible combinations. We have got to look at them, not with a frightened but with a careful eye, and so looking at them everybody, I think, will be prepared to recognize that the language of the foreign secretary, unusual language, let me say, in the mouths of foreign secretaries, does not go beyond the necessities of the situation."

Sir Alfred Lyttleton, a former secretary of state for the colonies, spoke with the same tone of apprehension when, in discussing the naval situation, he expressed the opinion that:

"The actual position of affairs is at this moment different from any situation that has existed since the Battle of Trafalgar. We are in the presence for the first time of powers equal to ourselves in mechanical skill and efficiency, equal to ourselves in national self-consciousness and aspirations, unhappily superior to ourselves in population."

From these weighty utterances of the leading public men of all shades of politics, some idea may be formed of the state of the public mind in the United Kingdom. England feels the imminence of "the great shadow" as surely as she did when Bonaparte assembled his flotilla at Boulogne in preparation for the invasion of England. And in some ways the two situations are analogous. German ambition under the spur of a warlike Kaiser is not less menacing than was French ambition under the impulse of Napoleon Bonaparte. There is the same anxiety in England, the same feverish desire to establish a formidable citizen soldiery. The fact that in one case the preparations were open and undisguised and that in the present instance they are going forward in silence, persistent disavowals of hostile intent tend rather to alarm than to security. Rightly or wrongly the average Englishman feels that Germany's enormous naval programme is directed solely against the British Empire and that the German navy will spell War on that very moment that it spells Superiority. The average Englishman feels also that there is infinitely more at stake now than there was in that great crisis when the invasion of England was deliberately planned and seriously threatened. It is not only England that must be defended, but an Empire scattered over seven seas. The weakest

link in the great Imperial fabric is the link that will first be threatened and the British fleet must be prepared to cope with that situation in whatever part of the world it may arise. That is why the idea of Empire means more to the United Kingdom today than it ever means. It has narrowed down to a question of Existence of Empire under circumstances more menacing and in some respects more alarming than have ever before existed during the long years of Empire construction.

II

The utterances of England's leading public men during the Imperial Press Conference, from which I have already quoted, leave no doubt as to the question that is uppermost in the minds of the British people. Domestic questions, some of them of exceptional importance, claim only secondary notice in a situation which appears to call for more adequate measures of defence. A budget with pronounced socialistic leanings and which, under normal circumstances, would throw England into a paroxysm of controversy, is discussed with a moderation most unusual in such an abrupt and radical change in methods of taxation. The fiscal policy remains the outstanding issue, but largely because of its relationship to the supreme question of defence.

Defence against what and against whom? That is a question which Lord Rosebery, Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Balfour, in their ominous speeches delivered a few weeks ago, left for the public to infer. In no instance was the name of Germany even mentioned, but the European situation was described in language which clearly and bluntly traced the cause of British apprehension to the imperial house of Hohenzollern.

That the German naval programme is directed against Great Britain would hardly be denied in Germany outside of official circles. The German press boldly accepts the impeachment and so do many of the leading public men of Germany who are not restricted by the responsibilities of office. They differ from the British point of view only in the declaration that the powerful German navy that is building is for defensive and not for aggressive purposes. This is a point which deserves elaboration, partly because there are two sides to every quarrel and also because it opens up some interesting aspects of this long standing Anglo-German feud which now appears to be approaching a dangerous crisis. The situation is all the more extraordinary by reason of the fact that there is no single question outstanding which gives promise of so much as a ripple of unpleasantness in the relations between the two countries.

Why then this frantic rivalry in battleship building between Great Britain and Germany, a rivalry that is impoverishing

both nations? Why should a natural international jealousy, primarily induced by the keenness of industrial competition, suddenly burst forth in these preparations for war? It is at least significant that the German naval programme assumed its most threatening form when the present British government undertook to conform the British navy to its peculiar notions of economy and gave Germany an opportunity which she promptly seized.

Conditions for Germany were favored by coincident changes—radical changes in naval architecture. And so it was that while Great Britain practiced naval economy the Germans built battleships, built Dreadnoughts, or rather battleships more formidable than Dreadnoughts. And so it is that while the British government is still floundering about in its effort to choose between economy and naval supremacy, Germany is building battleships, deepening her harbors, extending her docks and so improving her general equipment that she will soon be able, if she is not able now, to actually build in an emergency warships faster than they can be built in Great Britain.

Concerning the merits of the respective positions there is, of course, a variety of conflicting opinion. This much, however, may be accepted as an unchallengable fact, that Great Britain does not want war, and that Great Britain's interests would not be served by war. Sir Edward Grey was unquestionably sincere in his presentation of British foreign policy when he said:

"The foreign policy of this country is to keep what we have got, to consolidate and develop it, to quarrel as little as possible with other people and to uphold in the councils of the world and by diplomacy those ideals by which we set so much store."

That is indeed an impartial statement of the case. Great Britain has all the dominions she wants, sufficient lands overseas to take care of her overflow population and to provide friendly markets for her goods. She is not deficient in any part of the world in naval bases, military posts or strategic possessions. The German diplomat, in reply to this statement of facts, cynically observes that Great Britain has obtained a surfeit of those things which growing nations envy, largely by means of her overwhelming sea power, and that it is no virtue for her to now sit back and disclaim selfish motive in that which she no longer requires. The answer is neither logical nor truthful, but it throws some light on German diplomacy and adds independent testimony in favor of England's protestation that the last thing she desires in the world is war.

Upon the latter point there can be no reasonable conflict of opinion. Apart from a possible indemnity there is nothing Great Britain could gain from a successful war. There are no posts,

bases or other strategic positions that could go with victory sufficiently alluring to even encourage a passing desire for conquest. Germany is in a different position. While Great Britain would have little to gain from the defeat of Germany, Germany would have priceless things to gain from the defeat of Great Britain. Germany has come through only one great war, the Franco-German war, and by exacting an enormous indemnity she made that war a financially profitable undertaking apart from the cession of territory and her added prestige among the nations.

If by any chance Germany should be able to destroy British sea power, she would demand as indemnity five thousand million dollars in British gold. She would demand also Gibraltar, Malta, possibly Portsmouth and numerous other strategic positions and territories in which England is so rich and Germany so poor.

The marvellous attractiveness of the temptation adds, no doubt, to British apprehension of Germany's designs, and the Germans would be hardly human if, in their optimistic moments, some such ambition did not take possession of their minds. Great Britain's short-sighted policy of economy in the navy has indeed invited the Germans to whet this unholy appetite and all the raging controversy in England concerning the weakness of the British navy must inevitably encourage an aggressive spirit in Germany and convert into a conviction what has been merely a dream that Germany is destined to rule the waves. "For forty years," as Lord Rosebery truly said, "it has been a platitude to say that all Europe is an armed camp and for forty years it has been true that all nations have faced each other armed to the teeth and that, in some respects, has been a guarantee of peace."

Why should Great Britain have removed this grim guarantee of peace without first providing a better or a more humanitarian one? That is what Great Britain virtually did do when she weakened her navy in the so-called interests of economy, thereby inviting a dangerous and fearfully costly rivalry in battleship building which a normal policy of British naval development would never have created. The mistake may not be a fatal one, for whatever apprehension there may be in England there is no fear. Everyone realizes that whatever Germany may be able to do three or four years hence, a naval war under present conditions would, in the space of a few days, bring Hamburg, Bremen, the Kaiser Wilhelm canal and the Baltic ports under British cannon till terms of settlement were arranged. But while the mistake can, and it is to be sincerely hoped will, be repaired it will require a hideous expenditure on battleships, cruisers, and destroyers to rid Germany of the naval impulse that has seized her and to convince her that in the race for naval supremacy she is playing a losing game.

III

On the surface there appears no tangible reason for Germany's lately acquired determination to challenge British sea power. There are no specific questions that are at all likely to invite conflict between the two countries. British naval supremacy does not row, any more than it did fifty years ago, offer the slightest menace to the peaceful development of the German empire. If British diplomacy had suddenly assumed a menacing form, if the British fleet had been transformed from a surety of peace to an instrument of aggression then it would be possible to understand Germany's new naval programme. But there has been no change in the British foreign policy except perhaps in its greater efforts to avoid settlement of international disputes by arbitrament of arms.

German influence has gained immensely under this so-called menace of British sea power. Within the past few months German influence was sufficient to dominate Europe and to confirm Austria in her monstrous assumption of sovereignty over Bosnia and Herzegovina. That was hardly the accomplishment of a nation groaning under the oppressive influence of British naval power. It was the achievement of a nation speaking with the authority of the most powerful army on earth, a nation which, to use Lord Rosebery's words, "cannot arm any more upon land so has to seek new armaments upon the sea, piling up this enormous preparation as if for an Armageddon."

With a land force sufficient to bid Great Britain, France and Russia stand back while her ally annexed two Servian provinces, what need has Germany of corresponding sea power? Her land force renders her free from the possibility of successful invasion. Her colonial possessions are a mere bagatelle. Unlike England she is in a measure self-contained and while a blockade of the British Isles would starve Great Britain into submission in three weeks, a blockade of German ports would be attended with no such disaster.

It is obvious therefore that we must look beyond Europe itself for the real motives which prompt Germany's present aggressive measures in the direction of battleship building. It is indeed a world struggle towards which these two great nations are tending, a struggle which will determine which of them is to be the great civilizing influence of the twentieth century. The nineteenth century was the century of nations. The twentieth century is to be the century of empires. The nations that cannot maintain the pace will be pushed from the arena of world affairs. The opening of the twentieth century finds Great Britain established in the empire class. Russia, in her attempt to confirm and strengthen her status of empire, has been temporarily checked

and Japan has gone forward. Germany, strong in her belief that her people embody all that is best and virile in the human race, strong in wealth, strong in national self-consciousness and aspirations, is not disposed to remain a nation with her cramped area while an overflow population and a rapidly expanding trade demand an outlet. And that, according to the German point of view, is where British naval supremacy bars the way. That is why the German navy must be made at least equal in strength to the British navy.

Dr. Gaevernitz, the new pro rector of Friburg university, has elaborated this point with great thoroughness from the German standpoint and his statement of the case may be accepted as embodying German policy and the views and aspirations of the German people. For centuries, Gaevernitz contends, England has decided her foreign questions from the merchants' point of view and by her commercial policies she has rounded the world. After two hundred years of continual war with France she rose in the nineteenth century to world dominion and passed beyond the reach politically and economically of all competing powers. With her command of the seas she established a monopoly of colonies, granting to others what lines she chose. In the far places of the world the Briton represents the European and of all the nations of the earth Great Britain alone could be compared to the ancient greatness of Rome.

Then followed Germany's phenomenal industrial growth fostered by a policy of protection, and the development of a bitter rivalry between Germany and Great Britain. Dr. Gaevernitz professes to believe that England is trying to isolate Germany by diplomacy and by entente cordiales. He frankly admits that he can find nothing tangible to support this suspicion, but he declares that official England has been pitted against Germany since that day when together they won the battle of Waterloo. Elaborating this point Dr. Gaevernitz says:

"England it was that at the congress of Vienna effected the reconstruction of the Netherlands. Yet the Netherlands had been formally conquered by Buelow and the southern half of it with Antwerp itself, had been German dominion from the time of the revolution. Later England sought to crowd back our forming Germany from the sea, particularly when we annexed our needed duchies of the Elbe. Palmerston had the whole English nation behind him when he denounced our war against Denmark as 'criminal.' Disraeli designated the war of 1866 (Prussian-Austrian war) as the German revolution' which he said disturbed the balance of Europe to the injury of England. Again it was English influence which at the decisive moment of the Franco-Prussian war delayed the bombardment of Paris and thereby threatened to turn against us one of the historic decisions of the world. During the course of the nineteenth century many were the German plans for the establishment of colonies, that were wrecked by the opposition of British government. As it was, our enterprise in foreign trade could accomplish nothing without the backing of a united nation strong at sea."

Whether we will or no, Gaevernitz goes on to say, the dice that Bismark threw have fallen. We are no longer troubled by the choice of our road for we have already traversed a long stretch of it. Already the economic existence of Germany stands or falls by its commerce with the outer world which alone makes it possible to support sixty million men on so small an area. That is the secret of German ambition, that is the impulse behind the gigantic naval programme which aims at German naval supremacy, even though the attainment of that supremacy shall bankrupt the nation. It is the longing, the determination—the Germans say the necessity—for expansion and the German naval programme bears grim testimony to the fact that the expansion is to be at some other nation's expense.

Dr. Gaevernitz professes to regard sudden war as the great danger and quotes Englishmen and the English press as engaged in an attempt "to strike to earth the rival who is worsting England in the economic battle.

"Tomorrow," he says, "an unconquerable greater Germany will cast her shadow over Europe. Today, in her weakness she can be overwhelmed. The situation has grown more acute since Germany now offers the British navy a broad surface of attack. There are for first prey the great scattered fleet of Germany's merchant marine, and her flourishing colonies, both marked for defencelessness. And more disastrous far than the havoc of the seas, a blockade of German ports would shake German industrial life to its very foundation, it would mean immediate and perhaps complete ruin."

This argument carries its own contradiction. Dr. Gaevernitz does not explain why, if England is so determined to wreck German development, she should wait for a "tomorrow" when she is supreme "today." That is the most impressive guarantee of peaceful intentions that it is within the power of any nation to offer. German development has not been thwarted in any single instance by British supremacy on the seas. A nation less civilized and humanitarian than England would never have calmly witnessed the development of a navy which might menace her very existence and which would in any case bleed her white in a money spending contest. England has permitted the development of such a navy and is already paying the price in a frenzied battleship rivalry of which no one can see the end. Gaevernitz declares that there can be no disarmament for Germany so long as any power has it within its pleasure to destroy the sea trade of Germany. England, he declares, must sooner or later accept the inevitable and know that her dominance of the sea in the nineteenth century is destined to give way to a naval balance of power divided among four or five nations. That is the situation bluntly told. That is the situation which foolish naval economies have encouraged and which only heroic efforts can redeem.

IV

There may have been occasions since the commencement of Germany's stupendous naval programme when reasonable doubt arose as to whether it could be successfully carried out. Germany has her domestic problems and she has her financial perplexities. Dogged adherence to naval undertakings which courted national bankruptcy was by no means a matter of certainty and Europe was not lacking in prophets who likened Germany to the land rat of fable that got the foolish notion to go to sea. It was pointed out that the German taxpayer, already overburdened with the cost of maintaining a nation in arms, would soon grow restive under the added strain of building and maintaining a mighty naval armament. Sooner or later, it was argued, the kaiser would have more trouble within his empire and without. The German taxpayer did grow restive but German patriotism supplied the needed curb.

The Germans are a peaceful people, not naturally affected with dreams of conquest, but in the last analysis they are in the hands of their rulers, to whose will they yield loyal and gracious obedience. Europe has therefore to reckon, not with the natural inclinations of an ordinarily peace-loving people but with the known determinations of a ruthlessly ambitious kaiser. In this phase of German temperament we have the secret of the popular acquiescence in naval expenditures which are crushing the German taxpayers and which are crushing also the taxpayers of nations that are compelled to keep the pace the German emperor has set. Lord Rosebery had this condition of affairs in mind when he likened the situation to "what Petrarch called a 'silens bellum' a silent warfare in which not a drop of blood is shed in anger, but in which the very last drop is exacted from the living body by the lancets of European statesmen." And it was in pursuance of this line of thought that England's great orator added:

"When I see this bursting out of navies everywhere, when I see one country alone (Germany) asking for \$125,000,000 of extra taxation for war-like preparation, when I see the absolutely unprecedented sacrifices which are asked from us on the same ground, I do begin to feel uneasy about the outcome of it all and to wonder where it is ever going to stop—if it is merely going to bring Europe back into a state of barbarism or whether it will cause a catastrophe in which the working men of the world at any rate will say 'we will have no more of this madness which is grinding us to powder.'"

Madness it is, and the people of the competing nations are being ground to powder by the millstones of taxation, but there is no sign of German discouragement, least of all of German abandonment of the bold course upon which she has entered. Great Britain can no longer shape her naval policy according to her hopes. She has already sacrificed enough on the altar of foolish economies and fantastic theories. She has now to face

conditions which are not less apparent to the man on the street than to the diplomats in the foreign office. The initial mistake was made by Great Britain in paring down her naval programme without first securing the co-operation of Germany in a mutual reduction of armament. That co-operation we are told was sought and specifically refused; in which event it was all the more imperative that Great Britain should have strengthened her naval programme instead of weakening it. Battleships are expensive, it is true, but as someone has said battleships are cheaper than battles and "economy" that merely spurs a powerful rival to greater energies and larger expenditures is not economy at all; Sooner or later, that competition must be met and it can only be met by expenditures which cancel over and over again the original so-called economies.

Provided naval supremacy is vital to the British Empire, and upon this point there seems to be no disagreement, it is inconceivable that economy in Britain's naval armament should ever have been considered except in co-operation with her rivals. So long as a rival nation has before it the fixed idea of naval supremacy, regardless of cost, it is folly to talk of British naval supremacy as something subject to economies. The two positions are in fact irreconcilable. If Great Britain must practice economy in preparing her naval programme then she must be prepared to hand over the mastery of the seas to a nation which is not restrained to the same extent in fixing her naval expenditures, by considerations of economy. The present government seems to have had no notion of sacrificing British naval supremacy, but how it expected to avoid this calamity when it calculated the country's naval needs within the limits of an obstinate adherence to economy is a mystery which has yet to be satisfactorily explained.

It is a question if the emperor of Germany could in the midst of his most feverish ambitions have hoped for anything quite so fortunate as Britain's ill-fated, short-sighted naval retrenchment. That was an opening which every intelligent German could appreciate. It gave the kaiser precisely what he wanted—an inducement to the German people to endorse a forward policy in battleship building. If Great Britain had seized that moment to remedy her mistake, and if a naval programme had been prepared which would have demonstrated British determination to maintain her normal naval supremacy, it is doubtful if Germany would have persisted in her daring and costly experiment. But Great Britain did not remedy her mistake. And suddenly when the situation was revealed in the house of commons and when controversy, not unmixed with apprehension, arose throughout the land, the German emperor was again favored. It became apparent to the people of Germany that the kaiser's dash for naval supremacy was not without its possibilities of success.

The longer the controversy rages in England, the longer the two camps rage furiously at each other, the one contending that there is a rational anxiety and the other contending that the anxiety is panic and scare, the more thoroughly will the German people become imbued with the kaiser's naval ambitions and the more sacrifices they will be prepared to make for their realization. Present conditions in England encourage Germany to accelerate her naval programme when the whole tendency ought to be in the direction of discouragement.

What could lend greater zest to German naval ambition and what could more endanger the peace of Europe, than the natural German inference that they have already approached, if they have not equalled, the naval power of England. Even now England does not appear to have grasped the truth that the way to restore confidence and to discourage ambitious rivals is to silence apprehension and conjecture by a naval programme which will leave no doubt as to Britain's mastery of the seas. That is perhaps a task which Great Britain alone may not be in a position to assume, but it is within the accomplishment of the combined resources of the Empire. An Imperial movement which would prove the futility of further competition with British naval power would be one of the greatest civilizing influences of the century. It would be a civilizing influence not only in its assurance of peace, but in its discouragement of the colossal spending contests which are impoverishing two powerful nations.

V

.... "I will ask you when you are in this country to compare carefully the armaments of Europe with our preparations to meet them and give your impression to the Empire in return."—*Extract from Lord Rosebery's speech, June 5.*

That was the obligation imposed on the delegates to the Imperial Press Conference by Lord Rosebery at the inaugural banquet. To say that it was a difficult assignment would be to altogether underestimate its perplexities. Lord Rosebery asked the Imperial Press delegates to do what all England is endeavoring to do, from the man on the street to the highest naval authorities in the land. The public has its differences of opinion and the naval experts have theirs.

There is Sir John Fisher, on the one hand, emphatically declaring that everything is all right, and there is Lord Charles Beresford declaring even more emphatically that everything is all wrong. Sir John Fisher affirms that the British fleet is not only in a position to cope with any emergency which may arise

this year or next, but that the British naval programme makes due provision for the future. Lord Charles Beresford does not hesitate to say that the British navy would be taxed to its utmost to maintain its supremacy today and he declares in the most positive terms that three years from now unless the British programme is enlarged, British naval superiority will be a thing of the past.

As between the assurances of Sir John Fisher and the apprehensions of Lord Charles Beresford it would be unsound to form a definite conclusion. Few people in England share Lord Charles Beresford's pessimism in the matter of the present power of the British navy, while a great many people, including naval experts of high standing and unimpeachable motive, have serious doubts as to the adequacy of Britain's plans for the near future. The feud that has continued so long between Sir John Fisher and Lord Charles Beresford has done incalculable injury not only in dividing the navy into two partisan camps, but in totally bewildering the public. That is the origin of the present panicky feeling in Great Britain. The public has no sound reason for anxiety, but neither has it any reliable warrant for that old time feeling of security which assumed the impregnable strength of British sea power. It is this insufferable uncertainty arising from the contradictory advices of naval experts that is causing so much dangerous unrest. The British fleet may be all right but the public does not know that it is all right. In the absence of positive knowledge the English public stubbornly insists upon looking at the gloomy side of things. That is a very good thing in its possibilities of moving the government and the admiralty to more energetic efforts but it is not so good in the inspiration it may convey and the aggressiveness it may suggest to rival nations.

The merits of the Fisher-Beresford quarrel have been canvassed over and over again without perceptibly clearing the air so far as the general public is concerned. The government indeed reached a definite conclusion. It upheld Fisher and ordered Beresford to haul down his flag. That, however, did not silence the controversy. Fisher and Beresford still have their respective followers within the navy and without. The extent to which Beresford is believed is indicated by the government's action in moving the fleet to the Thames to reassure the city of London.

Beresford and Richards are practically in accord in describing the present policy of the admiralty board as a series of "hazardous experiments." The new scheme for the entry and training of officers, they maintain, is likely to impair the efficiency of the sea officers in command of His Majesty's ships and

fleets, in which case "the end will be in view." The fleet, it is further contended, has been gravely reduced by the policy of "scrapping" so many ships and at the same time the dock and harbor accommodation has been decreased by the construction of vessels which cannot be got into existing docks and harbors, while no provision has been made for building new accommodation except the belated construction of Rosyth, which may be finished in six years, and two projected floating docks not yet begun.

The Fisher partisans ascribe most of these criticisms to personal hostility induced by the concentration of the fleet and the "scrapping" policy. The first had the incidental effect of enlarging Sir John Fisher's prestige and authority, while the policy of "scrapping" so many ships not altogether modern, left a large number of officers and men out of employment. Some of the criticism of Sir John Fisher may be traced to this source, but not all of it. Fisher is undoubtedly a clever, a very clever man. He is an able organizer and a shrewd manipulator. No one doubts his capacity, but it is urged against him, and this is the most serious charge, that he has allowed himself to become the instrument of the government in giving effect to its ideas of naval economy. Assuredly his concurrence in economies which brought the British navy to the verge of danger, suggests either incompetence or deliberate acquiescence in a policy which did not carry his own personal judgment.

In some respects Sir John Fisher's policy is almost unanimously endorsed. His action in concentrating eighty per cent. of the navy in the North Sea, withdrawing for this purpose the squadrons from the various outlying stations, is generally upheld, notwithstanding Lord Charles Beresford's effort to discredit it. Beresford contends that, Britain having only three weeks' food supply, it is most important that the concentration policy should not be carried to the point of leaving the trade routes unprotected. To this the rather effective rejoinder is made that if the British fleet is overthrown in a great battle the annihilation of the guardians of the trade routes would be a matter of easy accomplishment, and that conversely if the British fleet is victorious the enemy's commerce destroyers would have a short lease of life.

As to Fisher's policy of "scrapping" battleships and cruisers that are not strictly up-to-date there is a good deal of controversy. Many competent authorities uphold Beresford's contention that these ships should not have been thrown to the scrap heap till new ships had been built to replace them. The loss is not only in its direct weakening of the fleet, but in taking out of

the nation's service large numbers of officers and sailors that the navy can ill-afford to spare. Here again it is contended that Sir John Fisher allowed his better judgment to be overruled by the government's insistent demand for economy.

VI

Lord Charles Beresford has always contended that it was a mistake on the part of Great Britain to introduce the Dreadnought type of battleship and to advertise it so extensively. The government, to use the words of Beresford, said:

"Look at our Dreadnought; that ship could knock your fleet into smithereens in ten minutes."

It was the fault of the British naval administration, Beresford insists, that the people of the world had gone on building Dreadnoughts. Other nations were building these large ships and the only course now open to Britain was to go on building too. They were fond of finding fault with other nations, but it was their own advertisement that had let Great Britain in for such an enormous sum of money and raised all the world against them in competition.

Beresford is unjust in his criticism of the policy of building Dreadnoughts. If Great Britain had not led the way with these ships, which were the natural development of battleships of the King Edward VII. class, some other nation would have forestalled her. It is altogether to England's credit, and in fact it is a reassuring sign, that Britain leads the nations of the earth in naval architecture, which claim she firmly established when she launched the Dreadnought. Beresford is on much safer ground when he argues that there should have been less talk about the Dreadnought. It is undoubtedly true that, having invited competition in this class of battleship, Great Britain should have laid down two keels for every one laid down by Germany. Beresford is opposed to the "two-keels-to-one" policy in the matter of Dreadnoughts, but his chief objection is the cost, which simply cannot be counted so long as competing nations are spending recklessly in their determination to rule the seas.

The cost is indeed a prodigious item. Germany is to have twenty-one battleships of the Dreadnought class (most of them more powerful than the Dreadnought.) The "two-keels-to-one" standard would require Great Britain to lay down forty-two Dreadnoughts, the cost of which would be, for this one class of battleship alone, \$420,000,000. Then there would have to be sup-

plemental armament in the shape of cruisers, destroyers, submarines, etc., to say nothing of the building of docks and supplies of stores and ammunitions, without which a ship is absolutely inefficient.

Lord Charles Beresford argues that the British navy can be made secure against any reasonable conjunction of events by the expenditure of \$300,000,000. The requirements as Beresford estimates them may be summarized as follows: Ten battleships which are to be improved Dreadnoughts, eighteen second-class cruisers, eighteen commerce protection cruisers, twenty-four new class of vessels—boats that will be a little bit larger than destroyers, in the same position to the destroyer that the destroyer was to the torpedo boat in years gone by; four floating docks; the depleted stores made up, the ammunition made up to requirements, the foreign repairing stations restored to their capability of being able to repair ships if necessary; and to man these additional ships with at least 16,000 extra men. All of these ten battleships should, according to Lord Charles Beresford, be completed by March 1, 1914. Four should be laid down at once in addition to the four promised by the government. The cruisers, torpedo boat destroyers, stores and docks should be finished by March, 1913.

The smaller number of Dreadnoughts which Beresford recommends as against the judgment of most naval experts requires some explanation. Beresford does not believe that the Dreadnoughts will prove all-powerful in the determination of future battles. He made, in the presence of the writer, the somewhat startling statement that he would not be afraid to fight the Dreadnought with a battleship of the King Edward VII. type. The strength of the Dreadnought is in her speed and in the number of the long range heavy guns she carries. The Dreadnought has twice as many 12-inch guns as the King Edward VII. but the latter is stronger in 6-inch guns, which, at their shorter range, can be fired more rapidly and more accurately than can the great 12-inch guns (they are 50 feet long) that frown from the decks of the Dreadnought. These 12-inch guns have a range of 7,000 yards and in action with a ship of the King Edward VII type at that range there could be only one outcome. But, asks Lord Charles Beresford, how many days during the year would it be possible to fight at 7,000 yards in the North Sea. It would be an exceptional day that a battleship could be seen at that distance and in thick weather it would be impossible to fight at half that range. A smaller battleship or cruiser armed with guns with shorter range but more of them and capable of being more accurately aimed would unquestionably be effective even against a Dreadnought in thick weather.

That is one of the reasons why, in the opinion of Beresford, some of the older ships should not have been "scrapped" till new ones were built to replace them. Apart from weather conditions the life of a great battleship is precarious, especially with the development of destroyers and submarines and it is conceivable that in a closely contested naval struggle Great Britain might make very good use of many of the ships that have been sold or consigned to the scrap heap.

These theories, however, are rejected with scorn by Sir John Fisher and the admiralty. The Dreadnought idea has a firm hold on official England and the present policy is to rid the navy of everything that is not strictly up-to-date. The magnificent fleet which assembled at Portsmouth in honor of the Imperial press delegates aggregated in cost something like \$400,000,000 and there was not a unit which had not been constructed within seven years. When we consider that another seven years may bring about a similar development in warships, when we reflect also on the competition in battleship building which Great Britain has to meet, we get some idea of the fearful burden the United Kingdom is obliged to bear.

VII

Rightly or wrongly, and it must be admitted that the weight of expert opinion supports its position, the naval administration believes that Dreadnoughts alone will count in future struggles and that the nation which has a predominance in these giant battleships will win. The situation therefore resolves itself into a competition in Dreadnought building which again resolves itself into a question of spending power. To attempt economies under the circumstances is naval madness. If the money cannot be raised Great Britain must surrender her naval superiority. There is no choice about it. And it would appear that in view of the mistakes that have been made, now is the time when the British Empire should give unmistakable evidence of its power to out-build and to outspend any other nation. If, as Lord Charles Beresford has well said, a sufficiently vigorous naval programme is followed, the wild and insane naval competition will cease. The programme, however, must be made on fact, not on supposition. Due regard must be had for what other countries have built, what they are building, and what they propose to build. If the country had a good plan, Beresford asserted in his notable speech before the London chamber of commerce, and if that plan was carried out properly they might depend upon it that they would not have to fight. If properly prepared, they would ensure peace, and that was the aim—to ensure peace and ensure that, if any-

body did fight, it would be a certainty that they would win by their sufficiency and efficiency.

Public opinion in Great Britain seems to be fully committed to the Dreadnought policy; what it fears is that the government is not building enough Dreadnoughts. In completed battleships and armored cruisers the position of the British navy is reasonably secure and probably fulfills the two-power standard, but unless a more vigorous policy is adopted two or three years hence may find Great Britain hopelessly outclassed. Mr. McKenna, first lord of the admiralty, admits that Germany has ten Dreadnought battleships laid down to the British eight. According to competent authorities, Britain's continued command of the sea can only be secured by resolutely building two Dreadnoughts for every one built by Germany. To maintain that standard will, as has already been pointed out, entail an expenditure of \$400,000,000 for battleships alone, but the British public seems to be prepared to make the sacrifice. The Daily Mail, which is not numbered among the extreme critics of the government, declares that:

"If it costs eighty-four millions (pounds) to keep our sea power we must spend, and we will spend, the money, sooner than risk a disaster the cost of which would be reckoned not in tens but in hundreds of millions. And as sign and earnest that the nation will not flinch from the competition to which it has been challenged and will not surrender its heritage for any mess of Socialist pottage, the eight Dreadnoughts must be laid down—laid down this year—laid down without delay. Our politicians have promised; they have told us that the occasion demands exceptional action. We look to them to make good their words before it is too late."

This in truth is the gigantic task Great Britain must assume. There is no escape from it unless the British Empire is content to step aside from the procession of nations and allow others to carry on the great world work which Great Britain has pioneered for a hundred years. The part the overseas dominions will play in this epoch-making crisis is a matter of vital moment. It may even turn the scale in the determination of the supremacy of races. The curtain is already lifting at London where the representatives of the leading overseas states have assembled to solve the intricate policy of defence. On the conclusions of that conference depend to a very large extent the outcome of the frenzied naval preparations which are casting their shadow over Europe.

VIII

"Is there no bright side to the British naval situation?" asks a Telegram reader who has followed these letters. Yes, there is a bright side, but it would be short-sighted patriotism that indulged itself in ecstasies over the greatness of the navy

and failed to consider its weakness. One of the most reassuring aspects of Britain's naval position today is that the British public is free from self-complacency. British public opinion is critical, persistently critical, and will remain so until a naval programme has been framed which will set its apprehensions at rest.

And there is nothing in this state of the British public mind which implies reflection on the British navy. If the British navy has fallen below the standard which it formerly held, and it is idle to contend that it has not fallen below that standard, it is not due to abuses within but solely to the fierce competition of rival nations. Man for man, ship for ship, and gun for gun the British fleet could sink any armament afloat. On that point there is no division of opinion in England, not even among the warring naval factions. The British system of training men for naval service is admittedly superior to the German system. In the German navy the length of service is three years while in England it is six years. Even Beresford, who finds so many defects in the British navy, admits that in officers and men England was never better served. In his career of sixty years he says he has never seen better officers or better men; he has never during that time seen officers or men so anxious to learn their work, so unselfish in their duty and so loyal to the state as they are today. That is an aspect of the British naval position which can hardly be overestimated, for with all the development of battleships and destroyers individual competence is still regarded as a mighty factor in the determination of naval struggles. No one holds more strongly to this view than Lord Charles Beresford, who, in his address to the Imperial Press Conference, expressed himself in the following words:—

"A country may build what ships it likes, it may have the best boilers, the best engines, the best guns, the best armor, the best speed, but it is the human element that is going to win. An old fleet with well trained men and officers always working together, understanding one another, knowing what their admiral wanted and the admiral having the confidence which is so necessary in his officers and men, will beat the best fleet that was ever put on the water with untrained officers and untrained men."

At the great review at Spithead we were able to verify these tributes to the British sailor. It was one of the outstanding features of a spectacle which words can hardly describe, the strong, clean-cut, virile races of the men who lined the decks of the great ships drawn up in parallel lines. We saw them later, on Whale Island, where for half an hour two forces contended in sham battle with an earnestness that suggested the realities of war. There was nothing perfunctory in the movements of these men. Whether it was straining on the ropes that landed a four-inch gun from the attacking fleet, whether it was firing from the trenches, serving the defending guns or carrying the wounded to the field

hospitals the Britons worked like Trojans, fought as if their very souls were in the fight. And a great sight it was as following the repulse of the invaders, the last trump sounded, the "dead" sprang to their feet and stood at attention. Cheer after cheer went up from the two or three hundred spectators as the "Jackies" in obedience to a command, ascended the slope, formed ranks and marched into barracks. There was not a man who witnessed this thrilling event who did not feel that whatever might be the matter with Britain's ships there was nothing the matter with her men.

Of the appearance and manoeuvres of the ships only an expert could speak with authority. We saw great battleships with great guns and stately cruisers with smaller guns. From the decks of the Dreadnought, we saw the destroyers, grim, stocky, low set craft, tear past at regular intervals. They had a speed of twenty-five knots. As each one came opposite the Dreadnought at a distance of four hundred yards a great serpent-like shell, perhaps ten feet long and a foot and a half in diameter, darted from a tube, struck the water with a resounding splash and taking its course just below the water's surface, came swiftly towards the Dreadnought. It left in its wake a dark green streak which still marked the water between the destroyer and the battleship when the torpedo found harmless goal in the Dreadnought's nets. Fourteen destroyers passed in procession, each one firing as it passed. Two of the torpedoes jumped the nets which it was explained were lower than they would be in actual battle. As the cap had been removed from each torpedo the only effect of the destroyer's marksmanship was the fume of carbide of calcium and a commingling of fire and water as the torpedoes burned themselves out. A few minutes later sailors were grappling for the shells to tow them back to the destroyer to be recharged and refired. In twenty minutes, we were told, the same torpedo could be used again.

Then there were the submarines, a whole procession of them that passed in brief intervals, the first wholly above water, those following partly submerged and finally, bringing up the rear, submarines of which nothing could be seen but the periscope, which, at a distance of two hundred yards, looked like a stick cutting its way through the waves. This was the most delicate manoeuvre of the day, for there were at least two hundred vessels in the vicinity and the submerged submarine, while afforded through its periscope a slight range of vision, sees imperfectly under the most favorable conditions. "Thank Heaven it's over," said one of the commanders of the submarine fleet as the last periscope bobbed by. He had watched the manoeuvre from the decks of the Dreadnought and knew the dangers that attended it.

All this was magnificent, it was impressive, it was a sight which could not fail to inspire pride in the heart of every Briton who beheld it and felt that he was a factor in its creation. (As a Canadian I could but sadly reflect that we had not a dollar in it). But apart from the general impression, the appearance of power and the unmistakable evidence of competence on the part of officers and men, we know no more about the efficiency of the British navy after we had passed the eighteen miles of warships than we did before. The fleet assembled at Portsmouth looked powerful, and it assuredly was powerful, but what was its relative power? How did the Dreadnoughts measure up with Germany's Dreadnoughts, the cruisers with Germany's cruisers, the destroyers with Germany's destroyers. That is the only standard by which the power of the British navy could be estimated and it is a standard which we knew nothing about.

Arthur Lee described the display at Portsmouth as eye-wash. He was right in the sense that any confidence the spectacle may have inspired would not be on a sure or even a reasonably safe foundation. The British navy does not give up its secret to the inspection of anyone but experts and those experts, if their opinions are to have value, must know as much about foreign navies as they know about the British navy. Still it was refreshing to learn that Britain leads the world in naval architecture, that she leads in the quality of her sailors and probably in the skill of her officers. It has still to be demonstrated that she can lead in spending power, which in the final analysis must fix her place among the world's great naval powers. That is the British problem, the Imperial problem, that has presented itself with such dramatic suddenness for solution.

IX

A wise man once said: "Find out what your enemy wants you to do and then don't do it." That is an axiom that could be profitably employed in determining the naval policy of Great Britain and the British Empire. Everyone knows what German diplomats want Great Britain to do. From the kaiser down they have constantly endeavored to lull England into a sense of false security. Letters have been written from high authorities in Germany to high authorities in England urging unofficially the desirability of reducing the British naval programme. One of these letters was from no less a personage than Kaiser Wilhelm, and it was directed (privately) to no less a personage than the then first lord of the British admiralty. There have been all kinds of disclaimers of hostile motive against Great Britain, yet, despite these soothing assurances, the process of creating a gigantic German navy has gone steadily forward. The more Great Britain

has endeavored to economize on naval construction the more Germany has endeavored to spend. And so it is that the four power standard which Great Britain held in great battleships when the Dreadnought policy was commenced has fallen below the two power standard. Listening to the siren song of the German peace pretenders has proved for England a costly and it may be a dangerous form of entertainment.

There are people in England and some outside of England who would repeat the stupendous short-sightedness that lured the British government into naval economies. They have been beguiled by one deception and they now appear willing to be trapped by another. I refer to those who profess to regard as senseless panic the present state of British public opinion on the naval situation. There is a nation across the North Sea which devoutly shares this view, which sincerely hopes that the anxiety will be transient and that the British people will soon wake up to realize that they have merely suffered from an acute attack of nightmare.

Let us look into the position of these "panic-stricken" people and let us examine also the point of view of these so-called panic-mongers. It is true that as the British navy stands today it could in all human probability make the destruction of any single foreign fleet a matter of brief and by no means violent exercise. Two or three years ago the British navy in point of first class battleships, would have been equally effective against the best three foreign navies afloat if not against any four. Developments in naval architecture have made possible marvellously quick transition from a naval pigmy to a naval giant and conversely from naval supremacy to naval impotence. When we reflect on the almost kaleidiscopic changes in naval standards during the past three years what may we not expect in the next three unless Great Britain resolutely lays down two keels for every one laid down by her most dangerous adversary.

Let it be remembered also that the people of the United Kingdom are uncommonly strong in what we sometimes call in this country good "horse sense." They are among the last people in the world to feel fear and assuredly the very last people in the world to show it. Panic is abhorrent to the British temperament, yet candor compels the admission that there is at present in Great Britain a mild form of panic. It is not a panic in its apprehension of today, nor yet tomorrow. It is a panic only in its anxieties, natural and proper anxieties, for the future. It is a panic essentially sane in its inception and commendable in its endurance. It is a panic which the writer sincerely hopes will not be dissipated by taunts from without or false assurances from within. It is a panic which should continue till its insistence shall have compelled acceptance of an adequate naval programme.

England may yet realize that the panic-mongers, so-called, have rendered her inestimable service. At least two of the agencies that have contributed to the agitation are deserving of the highest praise. These are Lord Charles Beresford and the London Standard. Panic-monger is the last term that could be applied either to Beresford or the London Standard. One is a recently retired officer with a record which is certainly not surpassed by any living admiral. The other is one of London's foremost journals, whose only possible object in agitating for naval reforms is the vital public interest which it believes to be at stake.

It is conceivable that Lord Charles Beresford and the London Standard have sometimes been mistaken in statements of fact and sometimes in the naval theories they have advanced. An organization as great and complex as the British navy offers the widest field for contention even among experts, and information relating to actual conditions is not always easily obtainable. Two or three of Lord Charles Beresford's statements, it is claimed, were not strictly correct and some of his theories have been vigorously challenged. Lord Beresford is undoubtedly wrong in his opposition to the policy of calling in Britain's far-flung battle line and concentrating it in the North Sea; he is probably wrong in his criticism of the principle of introducing Dreadnoughts, though not in the light of the fact that Britain's relative superiority in this class of battleship was allowed to suffer. But, however, the critics may have erred in details, in principle, the alarm they sounded was sounded none too soon and none too vigorously. It is infinitely better that England should think her danger is greater than it is than that she should be persuaded that no danger exists.

Just as Great Britain lent encouragement to Germany's naval ambition by endeavoring to economize, so she must discourage that ambition by demonstrating that she has the money to spend for the preservation of her naval supremacy and that she is willing to spend it. Such a demonstration supported by the resources of the overseas dominions will discourage German aggression and may even lead to an agreement between the two countries which will divert to productive channels some of the millions that are annually going into engines of destruction. Following this demonstration or hand in hand with it, there should be created a Board of Strategy that would protect the navy against some of the abuses from which it has suffered.

At present the British navy is dominated by a one man power, the power of Sir John Fisher. The British fleet today is virtually the creation of Fisher. In his mind were formulated and carried out changes of the most radical character, not only in the construction and armament of ships but in the distribution

of them. Britain does not rule the sea more effectually than Sir John Fisher rules the navy.

Fisher's control of the navy is not unlike the control of the despot. Those favorable to the system defend it on the ground that the one man power in the navy is desirable provided the man is efficient. That is perhaps true. The despotic form of government may be defended in the same way. Government by a despot is all right if the despot is all right. It may be even superior in its accomplishments to a representative government. And so with the Fisher dictatorship in the British navy. Sir John Fisher may be a man in whom that vast authority and responsibility are safely vested, and then again he may not. There is no one who can positively affirm that he is fitted for that exalted position and there is no one who can successfully contend that he is not. British public opinion assuredly puts its faith in Fisher and the writer would be the last to suggest that the faith is misplaced. But what if the faith is misplaced?

That is a contingency which, however remote or improbable, cannot be altogether dismissed and even though Sir John Fisher may be the right man in the right place that does not justify the system under which any one man's power is made absolute in the British navy. Where one man would be safe in that dictatorship, ninety-nine would be unsafe. Though Britain may now be in fortunate possession of the hundredth man, can she afford to risk the peril of future selection from the ninety and nine? It is tempting the fates to permit any one man to hold the British navy in the hollow of his hand, to revolutionize on his own single initiative the standard of ships, to call in the squadrons from the seven seas and virtually concentrate them in one sea, to consign scores of ships to the scrap heap and otherwise exercise the limitless power of the dictator.

One adverse effect at least of this one man authority has been to develop factions in the navy and to contribute to the public anxieties which it is within the power of only one man in the United Kingdom to allay. This is an aspect of the naval situation which the overseas representatives at the Imperial Defence conference may properly submit to the British government. The British navy is vital to the preservation of our common interests and to the development of our common aspirations. Its efficiency should be the care of the best assembly of wisdom the United Kingdom affords, and assuming the participation of the overseas states in common measures of defence, it should be the care of the best assembly of wisdom the Empire affords. The one man authority in the British navy should cease, even though it be the authority of a man who inspires as many visible evidences of efficiency as Admiral Sir John Fisher.

X

"We can and will build Dreadnoughts or whatever newest type of ship may be, as long as we have a shilling to spend on them or a man to put into them. All that we can and will do, but I am not sure that even that will be enough, and I think it may be your duty to take back to your young dominions across the seas this message and this impression—that some personal duty and responsibility for national defence rests upon every man and citizen of the Empire. Tell your people, if they can believe it, the deplorable state in which Europe is rattling into barbarism, and the pressure which is put upon this little England to defend itself, its liberties and yours. Take this message also back with you, that the old country is right at heart, that there is no failing or weakness in her. For her own salvation she must look to herself, and that failing her, she must look to you."— **Extract from Lord Rosebery's speech, June 5.**

In these eloquent words England's great orator touched the heart of the great question of Imperial defence. That some personal duty and responsibility for national defence rests upon every man and citizen of the Empire is a principle which has won almost unanimous acceptance. The question is, how is this duty to be discharged? In what manner is the responsibility to be assumed? That is a question which the overseas dominions will have to work out for themselves, accepting from the Imperial authorities as much or as little advice and guidance as may seem to them desirable.

If there was one thing more than another which was clearly and unmistakably demonstrated by the public men of Great Britain in connection with the Imperial Press conference it was this, that England neither desires nor intends to determine the manner in which the overseas states shall contribute to the defence of the Empire. As the Rt. Hon. Reginald McKenna, the first lord of the admiralty, said:

"We cannot force our strategical ideas upon you; we should fail if we attempted to do so. If any dominion came to the admiralty at home here and asked us what our view was as to the best assistance for the purpose of common defence which could be rendered, we should be ready with an answer, but we should not necessarily expect you to accept our answer. You will have your own views as to the proper development of defensive forces in your own dominions. It is only by your working out your own problems for yourselves that you can gain experience. Lessons told you by others will never come home to you with the same force as lessons which you have learned for yourselves."

Mr. McKenna further explained, the overseas states, being widely separated and exposed to different influences, are not

likely to be a unit in their ideas of naval policy. The position of Great Britain differs from that of the self-governing colonies in the sense that her naval defence in its Imperial aspect covers the whole globe. Great Britain cannot admit that she has less responsibility in one part of the Empire than in another. The sense of partnership in the navy is common to the mother country and the daughter states, but the British authorities clearly foresee that there will not be an immediate unanimity of ideas in working out a system of naval defence of the Empire, and that this can only be accomplished by the nearest possible assimilation of the various views that are presented.

But while the public men of the United Kingdom made it quite clear that what the overseas states contributed, they would contribute without solicitation and in whatever manner they desired, they made equally clear their notion as to the form in which these contributions could be made most effective. The public men of Great Britain unquestionably feel that the most effective service the overseas states could render would be to reinforce the striking power of the British navy or, in other words, to add to its concentrated strength. The admiralty is clearly of that opinion; so is Mr. McKenna, and their views are shared by the Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, leader of the opposition. Mr. Balfour declared in his speech before the Imperial Press conference that, though local defence is necessary it is really subordinate to Imperial defence, and it is subordinate from the point of view to the localities themselves. Continuing, Mr. Balfour said:

"The German Ocean, the channel, the neighborhood of these islands, possibly the Mediterranean, those are the theatres in which, if there is to be us to attempt to dissipate those fleet contingents, so that when the time of an Armageddon, the Armageddon will take place, and it is impossible for crisis arises we shall not be able to have that concentration on which our whole Imperial existence and the defence of each separate portion of of the Empire really depends. The fate of Australia, the fate of New Zealand, of Canada, South Africa, India, is not going to be decided in the Indian Ocean; it is going to be decided here."

The situation as described by Mr. Balfour compels deep consideration, if not prompt acceptance. Naval power, under modern conditions of warfare, is measured by what a nation can do at a given point in the least possible time. That is the basis of British naval strategy today. Great Britain feels that Germany is her most probable antagonist, hence the concentration of eighty per cent. of Great Britain's naval strength in the North Sea. Following a declaration of war it might be only a matter of hours when the concentrated power of the British navy would meet the concentrated naval power of its enemy. Then and there would be decided not only the fate of the British navy, and of the British Isles, but of the British Empire as well.

And the very natural question arises, what help could Canada render with a squadron of cruisers off our Atlantic coast? What would be the value of an Australian squadron in the Southern Pacific, or a South African squadron off Capetown? The critical naval battle in the war between Russia and Japan was fought almost in the moment of the declaration of war. So it would be in an European naval struggle and the fate of the Empire might be decided with the squadrons of the overseas dominions thousands of miles away. Following the defeat of the British North Sea fleet, the Canadian fleet, the Australian fleet, the New Zealand fleet, and the South African fleet would succumb in quick succession. These are aspects of Imperial naval defence which the overseas representatives at the present conference ought to consider, apart from any preconceived prejudice against pooling the Empire's resources in a scheme of Empire defence. Concentrated, the resources of the British Empire can render us invulnerable to attack. Divided, they give us nothing more than a mere appearance of strength.

Nor must we forget that in whatever measures we adopt for our mutual protection the object is peace and not aggression. Our purpose is to discourage the building of engines of destruction, not to stimulate their growth. And there is only one way in which this purpose can be realized, and that is for the British Empire to demonstrate its spending power, which is one and the same thing as its shipbuilding power. Germany will not, Germany cannot, match herself against the resolute, concentrated efforts of the British Empire to maintain its mastery of the seas. So that whatever Canada's permanent naval plans may be, whether that of a local navy or a contribution of battleships to the Imperial navy on terms which will admit the equality of the parent and the daughter state, it does seem that Canada in the present crisis can accomplish more by increasing the strength of the Imperial navy than by laying the foundation of a navy of her own. That is undoubtedly the service which would do most to discourage the fierce naval competition that has been entered upon and to command, without resort to arms, recognition of the British Empire as the predominant world power on the sea. That is really what every good citizen of the Empire is striving for and whatever may be the most effective and the most expeditious manner of achieving that purpose is surely the measure which should be employed.

XI

If there are rampant Imperialists in Great Britain whose idea of Imperialism is to urge the Empire into some hasty form of constitutional consolidation, the writer did not see them. They are not to be found among the leading public men of the country,

they are not in evidence in the press, nor is there any section of the British public that appears dissatisfied with the present condition of things. The average Britisher makes no secret of his devotion to the idea of Empire. He realizes that it is the age of empires and that the nations which cannot expand into the larger destiny must fall to the rear like stragglers in a rapidly advancing army. Great Britain was in fact the first nation in the world to grasp that idea, to develop it and to acquire a lead which other nations, following her example, are now frantically endeavoring to overcome.

Realizing, as he does, what empire means, the Britisher is far too wise to experiment with it. He recognizes as we do that the colonial stage of empire has disappeared, that the attitude of the mother country towards the daughter states is no longer one of paternalism, but of equality. A "union of allies," an Australian delegate described the Imperial system, and his phrase found popular favor with Britain's public men and with the press. A "union of allies," the mother country is quite willing to regard it without setting forth in black and white the precise terms of the union or defining the obligations which the allies owe to one another.

We have been talking a good deal about our "autonomy" in Canada, as if some aggressive imperialists on the other side of the water were sitting up night to plan traps for our unsuspecting statesmen. If there are any such imperialists in Great Britain they maintained a masterly silence during the progress of the Imperial Press conference. Great Britain has no designs on Canada's autonomy, no motive direct or indirect in inducing Canada to depart to the extent of a single hair's breadth from her complete and absolute powers of self-government. Public speakers of both parties went out of their way to make this point plain. Even in the matter of defence, which is causing a good deal of anxiety in the mother country today, there is no disposition to force the hands of the self-governing dominions or to so much as hint that an obligation rests upon them. The mother country is, in fact, quite as proud in her position as we are in ours and quite as sensitive in matters affecting her dignity and her prestige. Great Britain asks nothing from any of the overseas states. As Hon. Reginald McKenna, first lord of the admiralty, said: "We don't ask, we have never asked for that generous assistance which is being so cordially offered by you and which we most gratefully accept. We recognize, and we hope we ever shall recognize, that in the development of what you may call the naval idea in every dominion, it is essential that the mainspring should come from the dominions themselves."

One Canadian delegate, an easterner, communicated to the conference his suspicion that the people of Great Britain

were still wedded to the colonial policy of George III. or something to that effect. The observation did not escape Hon. A. J. Balfour, who, in his address at the Constitutional club, stated the attitude of the mother country towards the self-governing colonies in the following concise words:

"I think it was one of the speakers from Canada who said in my hearing that there was a certain jealousy existing—I am not sure I have got his exact words, a certain jealous anxiety amongst sections of the population in Canada lest there should be any attempt on the part of this country to accept any organization which would interfere with the complete control of Canada of everything that Canada desires to do. Well, in the earlier days of the Colonial Empire, that fear might have been justifiable. There was a time when the relations of this country and the offshoots of this country were like the relations between parent and child. But let every man who hears me, who comes from any colony, understand that no politician of any party in this country holds that view any longer. On that let there be neither doubt nor hesitation. Everybody recognizes, so far as I know, that the parental stage is over. We have now reached the stage of formal equality and nobody desires to disturb it."

Lord Crewe, secretary of state for the colonies, also took occasion to define the relations between the parent and the daughter states. They desired, he said, to treat the people of the overseas states as kinsmen and allies and nothing was further from their thoughts than to dictate to them any policy or action. Premier Asquith described the Imperial connection as "an alliance between the ever growing and penetrating sense of unity and the fullest and freest recognition of an assertion of local liberties which is at once the secret and the safeguard of the British Empire." That was the tone which, without exception, dominated the utterances of Britain's foremost public men.

So much for Great Britain's attitude towards the self-governing states. There was defined not less clearly during the conference the attitude of the self-governing states towards the mother country, or it would be more correct to say, towards the British Empire. There was not a delegate from any part of the globe who spoke of loyalty to England any more than he would speak of England's loyalty to the colony. It was in every instance an expression of loyalty to the Empire and in this respect there was no lack of unanimity. The two representatives from the late Dutch republics, both of whom fought in the Boer ranks against the British, showed unmistakably that they shared the pride of the older dominions in the rights and liberties of British citizenship. Charles Fischardt, in a speech at Sheffield, gave eloquent expression to the change of spirit his people have experienced when he said:

"In that bloody and devastating war which swept over our country you overcame us. There was left a sullen anger among our ruined people ready

to seize any opportunity of a new struggle. You conquered our troops, our lands, our bodies—but our hearts and our spirits—never! So we thought. Then came a day—a wonderful day, when the conqueror with open hand approached us, holding out to us freely that inestimable thing for which we had fought—that liberty for which so many of us had died—and from that moment I think we were really conquered, we joined hands with you, and if ever the need arises there will speak for England on the wild and lonely veldt the unerring rifle of the Boer."

Canada's position was, on the whole, ably and accurately stated. It was favored at the outset by an admirable address by Sir Hugh Graham at the banquet given by the press of the United Kingdom. The sentiments expressed in Sir Hugh's speech were those of a strong, sane, virile Canadianism and drew from the British press many deserved tributes. At the banquet given by the British government, Godfrey Langlois, speaking first in English and then in French, left no doubt as to the willingness of the French-Canadians to do their part in the matter of Imperial defence. At Sheffield, J. W. Dafoe, of the Manitoba Free Press, in a speech which the Sheffield Telegraph described as "strikingly able," gave expression to a cautious but sound imperialism. P. D. Ross, of the Ottawa Journal, in a splendid address delivered at the lord provost's banquet at Glasgow, spoke of the constitutional development of the Empire as something that we could not yet see and did not need to see. While the speeches of Rev. J. A. McDonald, of the Toronto Globe, and J. S. Brierly, of the Montreal Herald, did not appeal to the writer in their expression of the Canadian sentiment, they were nevertheless notable contributions to the conference and to the events of the provincial tour. Other Canadians who did justice to the tasks assigned them were A. F. McDonald, of the Halifax Chronicle, who spoke at the university union, Edinburgh; E. W. McCready of the St. John Telegraph, in his remarks at the Marine Gardens, Edinburgh, and John Nelson, of the Victoria Times. The latter's brief address at Stratford-on-Avon, in the garden adjoining the house in which Shakespeare was born, was one of exceptional merit.

The Australians we found, on the whole, a little more enthusiastic in their imperialism perhaps than we are, but less enthusiastic than the New Zealanders. It was Hon. J. W. Kirwan of Kalgoorlie, who referred to the Empire as a "union of allies." E. S. Cunningham, of the Melbourne Argus, reflected the more cautious section of Australian imperialism, while F. W. Ward, of Sydney, was prepared to go much farther. Australia realizes that it lives under the shadow of the yellow menace and that its very existence depends on the preservation of that union of allies. Mr. Ward had this menace in mind when he said: "The history of Australia shows the value of British command of the seas. We have lived in perfect security for a hundred years. We find a great deal of the national produce, we have millions of acres of vegetation which helps to provide for millions. The great sea

roads between Australia and the motherland were perfectly safe; although several thousand miles long, one could always rely on these roads being safe. Never a sloop has carried a gun from our shores, nothing but a flag, but we must not forget that we are a great empty continent and a great empty continent is a terrible temptation. And Australia is only one part of the great British Empire. To some nations Australia would be an empire in itself and if there is any danger we Australians are in it, it is life or death to us. If our safety be taken away from us, then we have lost all."

XII

Not least among the accomplishments of the Imperial Press conference was the keener interest it awakened on the part of a formidable section of the Empire press in the affairs of the mother country, and the stimulus it supplied to the more active interest which British public men, British business houses and the British press are manifesting in the affairs of the self-governing dominions. A point of contact was established which cannot fail to bear fruit to the great advantage of the whole Imperial family. The Canadian delegates did effective service in pointing out the opportunities which the British manufacturers are neglecting in this country. This aspect of the trade relations between Great Britain and Canada was emphasized in public speeches and was further enforced in interviews contributed by most of the Canadian delegates to the leading London papers, notably the Daily Mail and the London Standard.

No one seemed quite able to explain why the British manufacturer has fallen from the position of easy supremacy in the Canadian field to a very weak second. The industrial interests of the United Kingdom have had their troubles all over the world, but nowhere have they been utterly beaten except in the Dominion of Canada. In Australia, and New Zealand, in South Africa, and in the Far East, the British manufacturer has met his competitor in the keenest kind of rivalry and in each instance he has more than held his own. In Canada, on the other hand, the British manufacturer has for the past thirty years steadily lost ground. In volume of exports to Canada there has, during the past few years, been a considerable increase, but in point of percentage there has been a continual decline. This unfortunate trade tendency is revealed in the fact that in 1872 Great Britain supplied sixty per cent. of the goods imported by Canada, and the United States supplied thirty-two per cent. In 1906 Great Britain supplied less than twenty-five per cent., while the United States supplied sixty per cent. The positions of the two nations in their trade with Canada were practically reversed.

A section of public opinion in England holds strongly to the theory that the decrease in British trade with Canada is due in a large measure to the absence of a mutual preferential tariff which would encourage trade between the two countries. That may or may not be the case, but the fact remains that the British manufacturer is primarily the custodian of his own interests. While an enlightened fiscal policy might aid, it could at best be a subsidiary influence in restoring British made goods to their former prestige in the Canadian market. The real secret of Britain's decaying trade with Canada is the indifference manifested by British houses in the Canadian market. Their manner of meeting United States competition in Canada has been distinctly un-British. It has been the very reverse of the methods followed in other parts of the world. Instead of fighting harder as United States competition increased, the British manufacturer has fought perfunctorily. Instead of squaring up to his competitor in Canada as he has squared up to him, and successfully squared up to him, in every other part of the British Empire, he has run away. This is not due to cowardice on the part of the British business men; it is due to their imperfect knowledge of conditions in Canada, which they have made no systematic effort to understand.

The British manufacturer has been completely captivated by the delusion that certain natural influences, notably geographical conditions, are irresistible obstacles to the promotion of his goods in Canada. This theory is contradicted by the fact that the more geographical advantages enjoyed by the United States' manufacturers have been overcome by fast ocean steamships, speedier cable communication and improved railroad facilities, the more British trade with Canada has declined. It is contradicted further by the most significant circumstance that those British houses—and there are a number of them—that have promoted their goods in this country by modern methods, have succeeded far beyond their expectations.

I met in Sheffield and Manchester a number of business men who were more than pleased with the market their goods had obtained in this country. Also I learned the secret of these exceedingly rare exponents of British opportunities in the Canadian market when they casually mentioned that they would look me up in Winnipeg the next time they came through. These men have made regular visits to Canada. They have studied conditions for themselves, they have learned what the Canadian purchaser wants and when and how he wants it. They have sent their travellers, they have in several instances established agencies and they have advertised.

It was refreshing to meet these men and to learn that, generally speaking, the fault is not with British made goods but

with the British way of promoting, or rather their way of not promoting, their sale in Canada. It was refreshing to find this spirit of enterprise and determined confidence as opposed to the all too prevalent confession heard in some of the great business houses of England that they are unable to sell their goods in Canada because Canada is too near the United States. Yet among these houses you would rarely meet a proprietor or a leading assistant who had taken the trouble to visit Canada and study conditions for himself. But you would find in this class, business houses that had sent out catalogues to Canada with the prices printed in pounds, shillings and pence, houses that had rarely sent a traveller to feel out the market and when they had sent one, probably sent him out of season. You would find a man who had never advertised in a Canadian newspaper or perhaps an occasional one who had advertised in an indifferent, aimless sort of way. I learned from a prominent advertising agency of one instance in which a British business man had advertised in a Toronto newspaper for twenty-five years and that during that quarter of a century the advertisement had not been changed to the extent of the dot of an "i" or the cross of a "t." There would be found another business man who would entertain you with solemn homilies on the hopelessness of competing against rival businesses in the United States.

These observations are offered not in a spirit of censure, for it is British interests rather than Canadian interests that suffer, but wholly from a desire to dispel the British delusion which is turning Canada into a preserve for United States' made goods. It is at least important that the British manufacturer should ascertain the facts before he forms a conclusion that he should see for himself what is before him before he is too far away. That, I am confident, the British manufacturer has not done. He is adhering with native obstinacy to a preconceived notion of the Canadian market and that obstinacy is costing the people of the United Kingdom anywhere from fifty to seventy-five million dollars a year. Many Englishmen were quick to realize, when the situation was analyzed, that British trade with Canada is a business question, tragically related to starving thousands who could live in comfort on the labor the British manufacturer is wantonly throwing to countries which need it less. The shortest cut to prosperity in the case of an individual is not infrequently the longest way around and assuredly the shortest cut to prosperity in the case of thousands of England's unemployed is not by acts of paternalism but by proper recognition, cultivation and development of a market which is capable of adding millions of dollars annually to British pay rolls.

XIII

"What do you bring to us; that is quite as important, that is indeed more important to us than what you can take from us? You bring, I trust, the youth of vigorous communities, you bring the candor of acute criticism, the frankness of speech which belongs to our younger dominions beyond the seas."—Extract from Lord Rosebery's speech, June 5.

One of the effects of the German war scare has been to cause the Briton to examine himself more critically than has been his custom. He has not stopped with a comparison of naval armaments, though that perhaps has been his chief concern. He has analyzed his business methods, his ideals, his inclinations and his manner of living and has compared them with the known characteristics of his neighbor across the North Sea. This is an interesting departure from the ways of the individual whom we have learned to regard as the confident, self-complacent John Bull. It is nevertheless a departure that betokens strength, not weakness.

The success which inspires confidence may also inspire overconfidence in a nation as well as in an individual. For nearly a century Great Britain has led the nations of the earth in wealth, in naval power, in shipping and shipbuilding, in industrial greatness and in the extension of her influence in the far places of the world. The achievement of world dominion and the retention of it for a hundred years could not fail to create a national character in which confidence, self-assurance and perhaps complacent satisfaction strongly predominated. It was equally inevitable that these national characteristics, moulded by the realization of the things which all nations envy, but which few attain, should to some extent discourage initiative and flexibility in business methods. It would be folly to suggest that Britain's unparalleled greatness has not in some respects bred weakness. In recent years Great Britain's strength has been tested in more ways than one. Those tests have not always demonstrated that methods and policies which triumphed over a long course of years are necessarily infallible or suited to all conditions and all times. Slowly but surely this truth is finding recognition, and will, with the characteristic caution of the British people, receive practical expression.

In the comparison which John Bull is making he does not find that he has entered upon that hopeless decline that his enemies delight to picture. He has in recent years fought a strenuous battle in the commercial and the industrial world. He has some scars but the other fellow has more. Germany's industrial competition has, it is true, wrought considerable havoc in England and in various markets of the world which the British merchant once regarded as his own. That is chiefly due to Germany's enlightened fiscal policy, not to any marked superiority in the

industrial attainments of her people. And it is true that in some other lines German expansion has cut into British enterprise. In the production of iron and steel Germany has outstripped Great Britain. German foreign trade grew from eighteen hundred million dollars in 1894 to three thousand millions in 1904. In the same decade its sea mileage, tonnage to foreign countries nearly doubled.

As against these successes Great Britain can still proudly assert that she is the freight carrier of the world. England still leads in sea borne traffic, in shipbuilding and in the manufacture of cotton. London remains the ruling banking and exchange market of the world. Great Britain still owns more than one-half the world's ship tonnage and has more ocean liners flying her flag than all the other nations of the world combined.

Germany, as Sir Alfred Lyttleton said or rather implied (he did not mention the name of any country), is now "equal to ourselves in wealth, equal to ourselves in mechanical skill and efficiency, equal to ourselves in national self-consciousness and aspiration, unhappily superior to ourselves in population." Germany is also favored by a more rapid increase of population and has a broader agricultural basis. Great Britain's farm population is five millions, while Germany's exceeds eighteen millions. That is a contrast which Great Britain may or may not be able to make more favorable to herself. I heard many delegates marvel at the abundance of land in England which did not appear to be under cultivation or at any rate not developed as it was capable of being developed. It was explained to us that the English farmer was growing less wheat and instead devoting himself to dairying and that this accounted for apparent waste of land. Still it was freely admitted that English agricultural activities are not what they might be. Statistics would unquestionably show that Germany, acre for acre, is making more profitable use of her farm lands than is England.

Germany is known the world over for the organizing abilities of her people. The British people do not appear to be particularly strong in this respect, though the superb organization apparent at every turn in the city of London shows that the Englishman can organize when he is confronted with the necessity of doing so. Many Englishmen declare that Germany has gone organization mad, that she is in fact over-organized. One of them mentioned to me a recent experience he had in a German city, Frankfurt, I think it was. He was in a hurry to reach Berlin and sent his secretary to the station officials to order a special train. His secretary returned with one of the officials, who said he did not think the special train could be arranged.

"And why not?" asked the Londoner. "You have half a dozen tracks running out of the city, you have the locomotives and the cars, why can't I have the train?"

"Well, you see," replied the official, "we don't like to disturb our schedule, it might cause an accident."

That was a case of an organization so mechanical and so inflexible that the officials had not developed sufficient initiative to vary it for special circumstances. I was told that this kind of organization prevails throughout Germany, that in the mania for organization the people have become machines and individual resource has gone to seed. The inference is carried to the extent of predicting that the German army and navy is also over-organized and that they will find themselves severely handicapped in contests which now demand initiative and resourcefulness on the part of the soldier as well as on the part of the general.

The statement is persistently made, especially by learned magazine writers, that the German is superior to the Briton in physique and mental alertness. If that is the case the German must indeed be an exalted type of manhood. I question if there was a delegate who was not impressed with the physique and mental vigor of the people with whom they came in contact. It was evident in the army and navy and the great factories we visited, in the streets of the great cities and in rural England. We saw, it is true, many, far too many pinched faces and dwarfed bodies in the great industrial centres, but they were the exception. The British people, for the most part, however they may compare with the people of Germany in physique and mental qualities, are assuredly equal to the exceedingly strong and virile race that inhabits the American continent. It is also claimed for the German that he follows simpler habits of living than does his English neighbor. That is perhaps true and it is just possible that in the course of the critical examination John Bull is pulling himself through he will find that the German example is worth following.

In one respect England appears to be weak and that is in invention. It was amazing to see how many British manufacturers were producing articles with foreign made plant. The Daimler automobile factory at Coventry, which turns out one of the best motor cars in the world, was largely equipped with American-made machinery. The same, I have no doubt, is true of the factory in which Chas. R. Friswell turns out the peerless Standard car, which figured so prominently and favorably in the transportation of the delegates during their stay in London. The British manufacturer makes no apology for the foreign made plant he uses. "We take a good machine wherever we can get it," he says, "and we are usually able to improve on it." It is a question if this weakness in invention ought not to be taken more seriously. It may be due to insufficient technical educa-

tion in England or it may be related to a fiscal policy which has not fostered British industrial interests as the fiscal policies of Germany and the United States have fostered the industries of those countries. Whatever the cause may be, it deserves more attention than it is receiving. In the building of battleships British invention easily leads the world. That is probably because Britain knows that she has to lead the world in battleship building. In industrial pursuits the Briton does not seem to regard it as a necessity that he should exert his inventive genius, and the result is that someone does the inventing for him. The inventive faculty appears to exist but it does not appear to be encouraged. England could add many millions to her wealth by offering some intelligent form of encouragement.

XIV

Whatever expectations the delegates may have formed of Britain's public men, before the press conference, those expectations had to be revised. The process of revision commenced with the inaugural banquet. We had all read at least some of the great speeches delivered by Lord Rosebery and had appreciated the power and eloquence behind them; we had heard him termed the "orator of Empire." We expected much, but we did not expect half enough. Even our friends of the British press who had heard the man, as they supposed, at his best, were not quite prepared for the dazzling eloquence that greeted us on that memorable night.

Lord Rosebery has a pleasing personality, a dignified but not what you would call an impressive one. His voice, powerful but musical, maintained an even pitch in all the varying moods he assumed. There was no straining for effect, no rounded periods, no ornate language. It was not easy to see wherein Lord Rosebery's eloquence drew strength from his personality or his style and yet there was an indefinable something in the man that gave power and impressiveness to his words. The effect of the speech on the audience was admirably described by a writer in the Sunday Observer whose comment was in part as follows:

"In its humanity, its statesmanship, its tact and its satire, the closing passages of patriotic appeal that now rang like a trumpet, now touched quickly the deepest chords in men who knew what patriotism signifies and means it—in all this the thing was not merely a triumph. It was a resurrection. It was the voice of half a generation ago heard in all the range of its powers, but more persuasive, more searching, more various than then. We listened to it in a mood of admiration shot through with touches of

regret. He spoke of Empire as no man left to us in active politics can speak. . . . He played upon every chord. He touched thought and emotion as he pleased. When it turned suddenly from picturesqueness and banter to the problem of Imperial defence, the speech in its contrast of sombre and luminous passages, was a searchlight upon the serious truth of our Imperial situation."

That night of the inaugural banquet was the last we saw of Lord Rosebery, that man of mystery, of incomprehensible temperament. Few of us in fact knew that we narrowly missed seeing him at all. I am betraying no confidence in stating that it was with the greatest difficulty that Lord Rosebery was persuaded to deliver the speech of welcome. He appreciated the honor of an invitation in which men of both political parties enthusiastically joined, but he had no desire to emerge from that strange retirement in which his matchless oratorical abilities are obscured. He was determined, quite determined that he would not deliver the inaugural speech, but the committee was more determined that he should. The committee succeeded, and history is enriched by its success. As a well-known London newspaper man said to me, "We took the best we had in the shop and put it in the front window."

Lord Rosebery headed, and in point of speaking deservedly headed, a notable procession of public men who subsequently passed before us. Nearly all the speeches, all the great speeches at any rate, were characterized by simplicity, plain talking, straight talking, concise talking. The Englishman of today, they tell me, is inexorable in his demand for short speeches. He has no mercy for the man who exceeds a certain limit, a limit defined by the prominence of the man and the importance of his subject, but a limit for ordinary occasions does not err on the side of license. That may be one reason why British public men have learned how to crowd such an abundance of thought in a half-hour speech. Another reason may be in the number of public men possessed by Great Britain who have been trained for public life as a young Canadian is trained for a profession or for some specific business. There is yet another possible cause and it lies in the delicacy of the subjects British politicians, especially those who are in office, are in the habit of discussing. Europe is today a gigantic powder barrel, not too well protected either, and an ill-chosen word, a mere slip of the tongue on the part of responsible statesmen might very easily apply the torch. When words have such dangerous possibilities there is a disposition on the part of public men to use just as few of them as will serve their purpose. A listener could not fail to observe when the foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, spoke, how he weighed every word, not without some slight evidence of nervousness, but with a confidence that left no doubt as to his grasp of the questions he had in hand. Every delegate carried away an exceedingly high impression of Sir Edward Grey. In his capacity as foreign

secretary, he has earned the confidence of both parties. His direction of the department of foreign affairs, while characterized by prudence, has given unmistakable evidence of strength and the respect in which he is held in England is shared by every court in Europe.

Apart from Lord Rosebery's speech that of Mr. Balfour, delivered at the Constitutional club, was perhaps the most notable. Mr. Balfour speaks fluently and convincingly without any of the arts of oratory, but with splendid effect. If I remember rightly, Mr. Balfour rarely referred to his notes, which indeed was the practice of most of the great speakers we heard. Lord Rosebery, by the way, did not appear to have so much as the scratch of a pen to guide him and if he had he did not refer to it. Premier Asquith refrained from attempting to make a great speech. His appearance at the official banquet tendered the delegates by the British government, was at the conclusion of a week of notable speeches which were not entirely without international significance. Mr. Asquith may have thought it desirable to adopt a less serious tone. He did so at all events and hardly gave us an opportunity of measuring his powers as a public speaker. What he did say, was well suited to the occasion and created a most favorable impression.

British public men take their politics mighty seriously. In their speeches they have a clearly defined objective and they take the shortest possible cut to it, rarely turning aside either for humorous sally or superfluous illustration. When humor is employed it is good humor. Lord Morley in his address on "Literature and Journalism," revealed a fund of quaint humor that was exceedingly entertaining. He related one of his own experiences which is worth repeating. "I remember once," he said, "when I was in charge of a newspaper there came to me a youngster who sought work or employment. I said, 'Any special quality?' Yes, he thought he had. 'Well, what is it?' I asked. He said, 'Invective.' 'Well,' I said, 'invective is an admirable gift. Any particular form?' 'No,' he replied, 'general invective.' 'I think,'" concluded Lord Morley, dryly, "I observe one or two quarters where I believe my friend must have since found employment."

Lord Crewe, secretary of state for the colonies, was somewhat disappointing in his address to the conference but he improved on the further acquaintance we had with him on the occasion of the government banquet. He gives one the impression of a serious-minded man, practical and methodical. In his address at the Grafton galleries he told a story that made a decided hit. He was referring to the insinuation that the press was not always quite accurate and said it reminded him of the story told by an English earl who had spent all his lifetime and a

vast amount of money in the breeding of Jersey cattle with a view to the production of the greatest possible quantity of milk. The earl was lamenting to a friend that notwithstanding all these efforts he had seen in a New York newspaper an account of a Jersey cow in America giving fifty per cent. more milk than the best of his lordship's herd had ever been able to produce.

"Oh," replied the friend, "don't let that worry you. You surely don't imagine that any English cow could ever give as much milk in a bucket as an American cow can give in an American newspaper."

Augustine Birrell is England's wittiest after-dinner speaker, and he well deserves the reputation. For some reason or other which I am unable to explain, the English sense of humor as expressed in public speeches appeals to a Canadian much more readily than the brand of English humor that is to be found in their press. Rt. Hon. R. B. Haldane, secretary of state for war, is not quite the equal of so many of his colleagues in the matter of speechmaking. He is a strong, thick set, stolid looking individual with a pronounced suggestion of reserve power. A fluent and forceful speaker is Rt. Hon. Reginald McKenna, first lord of the admiralty. I heard a well-known naval authority observe that he "did not know what the country had done to deserve McKenna," but it is a question if he has measured his capabilities aright. In so far as a speech may reveal the qualities of a public man McKenna unquestionably made good.

Three of England's great pro-consuls, Milner, Cromer and Curzon, were heard to fairly good advantage. Of the three Milner is the most fluent and Curzon the most forceful. As a public speaker Lord Cromer has no outstanding merit, but as an administrator his name will go down in history as that of one of the ablest who has served Great Britain abroad. Lord Curzon is not unlike Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper in style and appearance. At Oxford we found him a charming host and a speaker of exceptional ability.

Austen Chamberlain is a good deal more than the son of his father. He may not be a powerful speaker but he is clear headed and well-informed. He has an engaging personality, simple, unaffected and cheerful. He knows how to make friends and how to hold them. Winston Churchill's speech before the press conference was not a success. It may have been lack of preparation, or it may have been one of those "off" days which most speakers occasionally experience. Even those who have no use for Churchill admitted that he did not do justice to his ability as a public speaker on that particular occasion.

Lloyd-George holds a high place among the speakers of the United Kingdom. In fact the present government is strong in

individual ability though not so strong in its collective capacity. The name of Lord Esher also deserves mention. He is a leading member of the defence committee and in his admirable speech before the conference he displayed a thorough grasp of the Imperial situation. There were a number of other distinguished public men who did not figure on the official programme but who nevertheless displayed an active interest in the deliberations of the conference. Among these should be mentioned Lord Ridley, a splendid type of public man, and keenly interested in the problems of Empire. The impressions formed by the delegates of all these public men were necessarily passing impressions but they were sufficient to confirm us in the opinion that British public life is today rich in character, rich in ability and rich in patriotic aspiration.

